

VZCZCXRO9291
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #2298/01 1921230
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 111230Z JUL 07
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2152
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002298

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/10/2017
TAGS: [IZ](#) [KCRM](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#)
SUBJECT: MAJORITY GOVERNMENT NEEDED, PM MALIKI TELLS CODEL
MCCAIN

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: An obdurate Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki told Senators McCain and Graham on July 3 that the national unity government was to blame for delays in passing much needed reform legislation and called for a majority government instead. He complained that his government partners were all plotting to bring down the government, with some supporting armed opposition to it. His government was preparing for a possible Coalition withdrawal and may need to fill the resulting vacuum with new security structures. Responding to concerns about the recent arrest warrant for the Culture Minister, which caused the Sunni Tawafuq to boycott the Cabinet, Maliki rejected charges of politicizing the judiciary and said he would not intervene. There was a difference between the cases of the Culture Minister, where the Interior Minister attempted to execute the arrest warrant, and the case of General Mahdi who was charged in the Site 4 torture prison, where the Interior Ministry had not acted, said the Prime Minister. He claimed the Mahdi case was put on hold with the agreement of General Petraeus. (Comment: This is incorrect; both the Ambassador and General Petraeus pressed the PM very hard on the Mahdi case two weeks ago and did not agree to put the case on hold. End Comment.) The case of the Culture Minister concerns the right of an individual to pursue justice and cannot be stopped for the public interest, Maliki concluded. END SUMMARY.

UNITY GOVERNMENT CAUSE OF DELAYS

¶2. (C) PM Maliki met Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham on July 3 at his residence. Ambassador Crocker also participated. Responding to the Senators' concerns that his government was neither effective nor inclusive, Maliki said that he was not satisfied with the government program given him and that the national unity government effort was the cause of delays in implementing needed reforms. Iraq needs calm, gradual change, he said. Making the claim that the party lists were no longer sectarian, Maliki proposed moving to a majority government as a solution.

EVERYONE IS PLOTTING TO BRING GOVERNMENT DOWN

¶3. (C) Maliki complained that parties within his government support armed resistance to the government from both the Sunni and Shi'a fronts. "My own political partners" the Sadrists, who have 30 parliamentarians and six Cabinet posts "attacked my home with rockets" said Maliki. The Sunni Tawafuq support the armed resistance and call the Coalition forces an occupation, he continued. The Kurds have their own ideas too - all were plotting against the authorities, working to bring the government down.

PREPARING FOR COALITION WITHDRAWAL

14. (C) Responding to concerns that without progress on benchmark legislation by September, there will be intense pressure in the U.S. Congress for the withdrawal of U.S. troops in Iraq, Maliki said that he formed a committee to evaluate options if Coalition forces are withdrawn or reduced significantly. There will be a need for new security forces to replace the resulting vacuum, he said.

WILL NOT INTERFERE IN ARREST WARRANT FOR CULTURE MINISTER

15. (C) The Senators expressed concern about the Sunni Tawafuq boycott of the Cabinet following the arrest warrant for Minister of Culture Asad al-Hashimi. Citing the failure of the Ministry of Interior to arrest General Mahdi al-Gharraoui, implicated in the Site 4 torture prison, Senator Graham told the PM that he was worried that the Iraqi judiciary was losing its independence.

16. (C) PM Maliki said he was aware of human rights and legislative violations in Iraq and that corruption was also a problem. He said he would not accept politicizing of the judiciary and rejected the comparison between the cases of the Culture Minister and General Mahdi. General Petraeus agreed to put some cases on hold, claimed Maliki, including not just General Mahdi, but also the cases against Sunni leaders Adnan ad-Dulaymi, Shaykh Khalaf Allyan, and Abd al-Nasir al-Janabi. Similarly, a few years ago, then-PM Allawi had MNF-I agreement to give Muqtada as-Sadr and 22 others immunity from charges against them. "I do not want to protect General Mahdi" said Maliki, claiming that he took action to stop torture at the MOI and arrested some people.

BAGHDAD 00002298 002 OF 002

17. (C) The case of the Culture Minister was different because it concerned the right of an individual to pursue justice and cannot be stopped for the public interest, said the PM. Mithal Alusi's two sons were killed in 2005 and there was evidence that the Culture Minister was involved, he continued. If there was an individual claim against General Mahdi, "I wouldn't stop the MOI from arresting him" he asserted. Though the arrest warrant against the Culture Minister looked sectarian, it was not meant that way, he concluded.

18. (U) CODEL McCain did have the opportunity to clear this message.

CROCKER